

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to and highlight Bread for the World's annual hunger report. This year's report is entitled, "Ending Hunger in America." Frankly, it couldn't be more appropriate or timely.

Mr. Speaker, over 49 million Americans go hungry every year, and we in the Federal Government—we in this Congress—are not doing nearly enough to fight to end hunger in this country. In fact, over the past 6 months, Congress stood by and let an \$11 billion cut to the premier antihunger safety net program, SNAP, take effect. To make matters worse, Congress followed up by enacting another \$8 billion cut to SNAP as part of the farm bill. We should all be ashamed.

The fact is Congress continues to make it harder and harder for the hungry in America to make ends meet and put food on their table. Although the Obama administration came into the office under the most difficult economic conditions in nearly a century, they also came in with a lot of promise. In fact, President Obama came in with, among other things, a pledge to end childhood hunger in America by 2015. That goal was achievable. Unfortunately, we have gone backwards over the past 5 years.

While I still believe there is time for the Obama administration to turn this around and make some real headway in the fight to end hunger, the sad reality is we are not going to end child hunger in America by 2015, and may not even make a significant dent in hunger by the end of this administration.

Just because President Obama will not meet his stated goal doesn't mean we should give up. That is why I am encouraged by this report from Bread for the World. First and foremost, it is refreshing that this report is honest and blunt. It rightfully states that hunger is a subset of poverty and that we can't truly end hunger without addressing poverty.

Just look at a few of the statistics listed in the report:

The average incomes of the top 1 percent of households rose by 19.6 percent in 2012, while the incomes of the other 99 percent grew just by 1 percent.

Nearly two-thirds of SNAP recipients are children, elderly, or disabled. Among SNAP households with children and at least one working-age, non-disabled adult, 62 percent work while receiving SNAP and 87 percent work in the prior or subsequent year, which hopefully should put to rest this distortion that somehow people on SNAP don't want to work.

Another statistic here is that while children make up roughly 24 percent of our total population, they comprise one-third of the Nation's poor.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that poverty must be addressed because that is the root cause of hunger. But Bread for the World lays out achievable and timely goals, goals that are not pie in the sky but actually doable. They call an end

for hunger in America by 2030, and they do so in a four-point plan: one, a jobs agenda; two, a stronger safety net; three, human capital development; and four, public-private partnerships to support community-led initiatives against hunger.

They call for achievable goals of a 25 percent reduction in hunger by 2017, a 50 percent reduction by 2023, and completely ending hunger by 2030. We can do this if we make the political decision to focus on and commit to ending hunger.

I fully support this plan. I only want to move quicker to achieve the goal of ending hunger. This report rightly states:

Ending hunger in the United States will require leadership not only at the Federal level, but also the State and local levels.

We already have Governors and mayors who are working to combat hunger. Governors Deval Patrick of Massachusetts and Don Beebe of Arkansas are committed to this effort. Former Boston Mayor Tom Menino was a leader; and I know the new mayors of New York and Boston, Bill de Blasio and Marty Walsh, are just as committed. And they aren't the only ones, but we need more help and commitment. The White House should convene a conference on food and nutrition to build on the recommendations in the Bread for the World report and come up with a comprehensive, holistic plan to end hunger in America.

Hunger at its core is a political condition. We know how to end it. We have the food and the resources to end hunger once and for all; we just don't have the political will to do so. Bread for the World, through this annual report and through their everyday actions, is trying to build the political will to end hunger in America. I know we can do it.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETRI) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Dear God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask Your special blessing upon the Members of this people's House. They face difficult decisions in difficult times, with many forces and interests demanding their attention.

In these days give wisdom to all the Members, that they might execute their responsibilities to the benefit of all Americans. And may their constituents understand, as well, that many in this country have interests at odds with their own, and that the task entrusted to their representatives is extremely complex.

Bless us, O God, and be with us all this day and every day to come. May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

THE STATUS QUO DESTROYS JOBS

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, a weekend editorial by The Washington Times stated:

The unemployment rate fell in January, which ought to be good news. But it isn't. Over the past decade, we have fallen into a strange and puzzling wonderland of opposites, where "economic recovery" comes with no growth, and unemployment rates drop when people aren't working.

The President's misleading message conveys that fewer jobs and government dependency is the new status quo, which destroys fulfilling lives.

Last week, a Congressional Budget Office report confirmed what the NFIB

and House Republicans have been saying for years: ObamaCare is destroying and will destroy 2.5 million jobs. 2.5 million fewer Americans will be out of work due to the President's health care takeover.

Our economy cannot truly recover unless ObamaCare is repealed. The President's Big Government policies are destroying jobs. House Republicans have solutions that will put Americans back to work. We understand the status quo should be job growth to help our middle class families achieve opportunity.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

THIRD YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF BAHRAIN PROTESTS

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the third anniversary of the peaceful uprising in Bahrain. Three years after mass protests filled the streets, the Bahraini Government's promises of reform remain unfulfilled. Systematic human rights abuses, restrictions on freedom of expression, and arbitrary detention continue unabated.

Nabeel Rajab, a prisoner of conscience whom I have adopted as part of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission's Defending Freedoms project, is one of thousands who have been detained or tortured for peacefully calling for reforms. Prisoners like Nabeel are denied access to medical treatment, and many are prevented from speaking about their abuse, even to their families and lawyers.

Because Bahrain is our ally and home to the 5th Fleet, the U.S. has the responsibility to ensure that the Bahraini Government adheres to its human rights commitments and enacts meaningful reforms. These should include releasing political prisoners and ensuring accountability for torture. Absent such steps, the U.S. must consider contingency planning for the relocation of the fleet.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1730

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. BLACK) at 5 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2013

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2431) to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2431

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013".

SEC. 2. NIDIS PROGRAM AMENDMENTS.

Section 3 of the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006 (15 U.S.C. 313d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting before the period at the end the following: "to better inform and provide for more timely decision-making to reduce drought related impacts and costs";

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

"(b) SYSTEM FUNCTIONS.—The National Integrated Drought Information System shall—

"(1) provide an effective drought early warning system that—

"(A) collects and integrates information on the key indicators of drought and drought impacts in order to make usable, reliable, and timely forecasts of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts; and

"(B) provides such information, forecasts, and assessments on both national and regional levels;

"(2) communicate drought forecasts, drought conditions, and drought impacts on an ongoing basis to public and private entities engaged in drought planning and preparedness, including—

"(A) decisionmakers at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government;

"(B) the private sector; and

"(C) the public;

"(3) provide timely data, information, and products that reflect local, regional, and State differences in drought conditions;

"(4) coordinate, and integrate as practicable, Federal research and monitoring in support of a drought early warning system;

"(5) build upon existing forecasting and assessment programs and partnerships, including through the designation of one or more cooperative institutes to assist with National Integrated Drought Information System functions; and

"(6) continue ongoing research and monitoring activities related to drought, including research activities relating to length, severity, and impacts of drought and the role of extreme weather events and climate variability in drought."; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(e) REPORT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013, the Under Secretary shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that contains—

"(A) an analysis of the implementation of the National Integrated Drought Information System program, including how the information, forecasts, and assessments are utilized in drought policy planning and response activities;

"(B) specific plans for continued development of such program, including future milestones; and

"(C) an identification of research, monitoring, and forecasting needs to enhance the predictive capability of drought early warnings that include—

"(i) the length and severity of droughts;

"(ii) the contribution of weather events to reducing the severity or ending drought conditions; and

"(iii) regionally specific drought impacts.

"(2) CONSULTATION.—In developing the report under paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall consult with relevant Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local government agencies, research institutions, and the private sector."

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 4 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 313d note) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

"There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$13,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2018."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2431, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HALL. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2431, a bill to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System.

I want to thank Chairman SMITH for his good work in bringing this bill to the House floor and for his bipartisan support. I also want to thank the gentleman and Representative BEN LUJÁN of New Mexico for joining me as an original sponsor. In 1998, Congress passed the National Drought Policy Act, establishing a Commission to provide recommendations on Federal drought policies.

The concept of creating a national drought monitoring and information system was proposed by the Commission in its 2000 report and promoted by various stakeholders, including the Western Governors' Association and in the 2004 report, "Creating a Drought Early Warning System for the 21st Century."